

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 COME-00 EB-07 DODE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 SP-02 /044 W

----- 121325

R 190830Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7360

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL KADUNA

S E C R E T LAGOS 11929

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, ENRG, MASS, MMOL, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN AIR DEFENSE RADAR (C)

REF: STATE 254450 (BEING REPEATED KADUNA)

1. NIGERIAN INTEREST IN EXTENSIVE AIR DEFENSE RADAR AND MISSILE SYSTEMS STEMS FROM CONCERN OVER INTERNAL/EXTERNAL SECURITY. MILITARY PERCEIVES NIGERIA AS VULNERABLE IN VIEW ISRAELI RADE ON ENTEBBE (SPECIFICALLY CITED TO AIRATT BY CHIEF NIGERIAN AIR STAFF), GENERAL INTERNAL INSTABILITY, UNCERTAINTIES IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS, AND DESIRE PROTECT OIL INDUSTRY IN SOUTHEAST ON WHICH NIGERIA SO DEPENDENT FOR ECONOMIC WELFARE AND POLITICAL STANDING. EMBASSY BELIEVES NIGERIAN CONCERN OVER SECURITY IS GENUINE, WITH INTEREST IN ACQUIRING DEFENSE SYSTEMS MORE THAN FRIVOLOUS FACINATION WITH NEW TOYS OR BASED SOLELY ON PRESTIGE CONSIDERATIONS.

2. A SECOND NIGERIAN MOTIVATION IS MILITARY'S CURRENT EFFORT TO MODERNIZE AND RE-EQUIP ARMED FORCES BEFORE PROMISED RETURN OF GOVERNMENT TO CIVILIAN RULE 1979, ON ASSUMPTION CIVILIANS WILL NOT RPT NOT SATISFY MILITARY'S PERCEIVED NEEDS. IN LINE WITH THIS, ARMED FORCES IN MIDST HUGE BUT UNPUBLICIZED BUYING PROGRAM INVOLVING BARRACKS FOR ARMY, AMERICAN TRUCKS, BUSES, BOOTS, SOCKS AND, MOST RECENTLY, TOILETS, TO LIST ONLY SOME ITEMS. SEVERAL NATIONS PRESUMABLY SUPPLYING WANTS; AS REPORTED ELSEWHERE CHIEF OF

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ARMY STAFF DANJUMA VISITING EASTERN EUROPE AND MOSCOW THIS WEEK

AND MAY INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF MISSILES, TANKS, SMALL ARMS AND UNIFORMS. (LAGOS MEDIA ANNOUNCED TRIP THIS WEEKEND WITHOUT INDICATING WHETHER PURCHASES INVOLVED.) MILITARY DOES NOT WANT EVEN NON-SENSITIVE EXPENDITURES PUBLICIZED FOR FEAR GENERATING CIVILIAN OPPOSITION TO LARGE OUTLAYS BUT MOST PURCHASES COMMON KNOWLEDGE AMONG INFORMED CIRCLES.

3. ON QUESTION WHETHER USG SHOULD APPROVE NIGERIAN PURCHASE THIS RADAR SYSTME, EMBASSY SEES NO RPT NO REASON DISAPPROVE. IF NIGERIANS BELIEVE THEY NEED IT, THEY WILL GET IT FROM SOME SOURCE, AND IN ANY CASE SYSTEM IS DEFENSIVE AND NOT OFFENSIVE. ASIDE DROM COMMERCIAL VALUE, SALE WOULD MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE US-NIGERIAN RELATIONS AND POSES NO UNDESIRABLE SIDE EFFECTS, PROVIDED FIRM WHICH SELLS THE SYSTEM SUPPLIES TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE. SALE WOULD ALSO BE IN US INTEREST IN PRESUMABLY IMPROVING SECURITY OF IMPORTANT SOURCE US OIL IMPORTS.

4. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION USG PROCEDURES MENTIONED PARA 6 REFTEL. IS EFWCUTIVE BRANCH APPROVAL AND CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION REQUIRED UNDER EITHER COMMERCIAL OR FMS SALES? IF SO, CAN APPROVAL BE GRANTED WITHOUT NIGERIAN KNOWLEDGE? OBVIOUSLY, NIGERIANS DESIRE ABSOLUTELY NO PUBLICITY.

5. FINALLY, EMBASSY DESIRES CORRECT REFTEL PARA 2 BY NOTING THAT INTERESTED FIRMS WERE ON TRADE MISSION LAST JANUARY, NOT SEVERAL YEARS AGO. THEY WERE INTRODUCED BY EMBASSY AIR ATTACHE TO MILITARY, WHICH SAT SILENTLY THROUGH FIRMS' PRESENTATIONS WITHOUT REVEALING ANY SPECIFIC INTERESTS. IF THIS SALE TAKES PLACE IT PROBABLY WOULD BE LARGEST TRANSACTION TO RESULT FROM MISSION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RADAR EQUIPMENT, BUSINESS FIRMS, INFORMATION CONTROL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 OCT 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LAGOS11929
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760391-1006
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761038/aaaabgnu.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 254450
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIGERIAN AIR DEFENSE RADAR (C)
TAGS: BEXP, ENRG, MASS, MMOL, NI, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006